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Social Studies Meth  
Oral Hist #4  
  
For this Oral history project, I decided to focus on the two people that have been most influential to my life –my grandma and grandpa. My grandparents are the people who have been with me most of my life. They practically raised me. Although it would have been a greater experience for me to have interviewed my grandparents myself, for reasons, it was impossible to do so.  
  
I interviewed my mother for this project. I do have an uncle as well, but he was unavailable to meet or talk with me at the moment.  
  
**Interview**

**Me:** Mom, can you tell me the basic information about Oba (grandma)?  
  
**Mom:** Well, your grandma was born Mine Igei. She was born on May 15th 1921 in Okinawa, Japan.  
**Me:** Who were he parents? And did she have any siblings?  
**Mom:** Well, I don’t know that much about her parents. She had a mother who died young during the war when she was in her early twenties. Her father lived until he was 75. He died of natural causes.  
As for siblings, she had one older brother who was a colonel for the Okinawan army before the war. He died in a horse accident.  
**Me:** Did she ever describe the experiences she went through during the war? Where was she at the time?  
**Mom:** She was here in Okinawa. As for her experiences, there was always one story she would tell me growing up. When the Americans invaded Okinawa, she would tell that one day a soldier came up to her. She was frightened, and he offered her some gum. She had never seen gum before, so she thought he was trying to poison her.  
**Me:** What happened?  
**Mom:** The soldier smiled, and took that piece of gum and broke it in half and ate it. She then took that piece of gum and tasted gum for the first time in her life. That’s all I know.  
**Me:** wow, I remember her telling me that story as well when I was younger.   
what did she do after the war?   
**Mom:** She took care of her brother’s kids because he was dead.  
**Me:** He had kids? Where was his wife?  
**Mom:** His wife decided to become a teacher. So she went to school while your grandma watched her child. She always loved children. She practically raised that little girl. Well, that little girl is now my aunt.  
**Me:** So when did she meet Oji (grandpa)?  
**Mom:** She married Oji when she was 28. She married late, which was surprising at that time. Then she had my sister and the rest of us five.  
**Me:** So what did she do after that?  
**Mother:** Well, she raised us until she was about in her late 50s.  
**Me:** Then what?  
**Mom:** Well after everyone left the house, she and your grandfather started to farm. They grew sugar canes and I believe pineapples. She did that until her late eighties.  
**Me:** I remember that. She used to walk up that big mountain every day. I can’t believe she did that until that age.   
**Mom:** Yes, and now she is living in that old home ever since her Alzheimer’s got bad. I know you’re busy with school, but you should go see your grandma more often.  
**Me:** I know….I know.  
  
  
**Grandpa- Chiei Ito  
Me:** So mom, what can you tell me about grandpa?  
**Mom:** Well, your grandfather was born Chiei Ito in September 15th, 1920, in Okinawa, Japan.  
**Me:** Who were his parents? And did he have any siblings?  
**Mom:** He did not know much about his father because he died a little after he was born. I don’t know how he died. His mother died when she was 74, so she lived until the 70s, I think. He was the youngest of 4 siblings, one older brother and two older sisters.  
**Me:** Did he ever describe the experiences he went through during the war? Where was he at the time?  
**Mom:** Well, I do remember your grandfather serving the Japanese military. He fought in Manchuria. At that time, he was married and had two children, your now step uncle and step aunt.  
**Me:** Why did he marry Oba then?  
**Mom:** Well, when your grandfather came back from the war, his first wife had already married another man. So he no longer had a family anymore.   
**Me:** Wow, that must have been tough. So when did he meet grandma?  
**Mom:** Well, he met Oba a while after that. He was 29 when he married her. Then all six of us were born (Hiroko, Hideo, Keiko, Rieko, **Emiko** (my mom), and Akira).  
**Me:** So when he got back from fighting, what did Oji do?  
**Mom:** He became a carpenter. Because it was hard for anyone to find a job in Okinawa, he took a job in the mainland for several years. He would come and visit us, but he was mostly gone until my late high school years. He was a carpenter for 30 years. There wasn’t anything your grandpa couldn’t fix or make. He made his house himself.  
**Me:** I love Oji house, it has so much meaning behind it. So he was a carpenter until he was 60s? What did he do after that?  
**Mom:** Yes, he retired when he was about 60. He came back to Okinawa to live permanently and then started the farm with your grandma, remember?  
**Me:** Yes, and he did that until his late 80s. I remember the only times he would be home was for lunch and dinner. I still can’t believe he was as healthy and strong as he was until his late 80s. I hope I can live like that when I’m old. I am so happy that I got to spend so much time with Oji –if he didn’t live until 90, I don’t think I would have gotten to know him like I did.